EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION

Achieving the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health
and
Conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Field Office: Shoshone Determination Date(s):
Grazing Allotment Name/Number: Burmah Allotment #80608
Name of Permittee(s): Karstetter Brothers Ranch

Standard 1 (Watersheds) ☐ Standard doesn't apply

Overall, the watershed condition in the Burmah Allotment is adequate for maintaining soil stability and hydrologic cycling. The transect site was in a Loamy 11-13" (Wyoming big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass) ecological site. The area had a relatively high abundance of cheatgrass and sagebrush was slightly decadent, but these departures were not severe enough to warrant a low rating. Major rills and gullies were not found on the allotment which indicates that soils are stable. The overall rating of this allotment for Standard 1 is none to slight. One indicator (9%) was marked moderate, three indicators (27%) were marked slight to moderate, and seven indicators (64%) were marked none to slight.

1 ☒ Meeting the Standard	5 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, **but making significant progress towards**	
3 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are **not** significant factors (list important causal agents)	6 ☒ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors (list important causal agents)	7 ☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands) ☒ Standard doesn't apply

There are no natural riparian areas or wetlands in the Burmah Allotment.

Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Flood plain) ☒ Standard doesn't apply

There are no perennial streams and no active flood plains within the Burmah Allotment.

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Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) □ Standard doesn't apply

Cover data indicate that Sandberg's bluegrass, cheatgrass, and lupine are the dominant plant species. The actual cover of each of Sandberg's bluegrass was 13%. Cheatgrass was 19% of the cover for the area. Bluebunch wheatgrass was 4% of the cover. Lupine comprised 11% of the cover. Wyoming big sagebrush, basin big sagebrush, and threetip sagebrush were present on 14% of the transect points. Perennial forbs comprised 15% cover.

There is no published ecological site description for this site, but the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a table available on their website stating the characteristic vegetation and its relative composition by weight. According to this table, bluebunch wheatgrass should comprise 30%, other grasses should be about 25%, forbs should comprise about 15%, and Wyoming big sagebrush should be about 20%.

Two indicators-Functional/Structural Groups and Invasive Plants-(22%) were marked moderate because of the effects brought on by cheatgrass. Three indicators (33%) were marked slight to moderate, and four indicators (45%) were marked none to slight. The overall rating for Standard 4 is Slight to Moderate.

It was determined that the allotment is not meeting Standard 4 due to the lack of mid-sized bunchgrasses. However, since the allotment has been rested from livestock use for 19 of the last 30 years, it was determined that current livestock management practices are not the cause.

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2 □ Not Meeting the Standard, **but making significant progress towards**	
3 ☒ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are **not** significant factors	6 ☒ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 □ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Standard 5 (Seedings) ☒ Standard doesn't apply

There are no seedings in the Burmah Allotment.

Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities, Other than Seedings) ☒ Standard doesn't apply

There are no areas within this allotment that are dominated by exotic plant communities other than seedings.

Standard 7 (Water Quality) ☒ Standard doesn't apply

There are no perennial streams or natural surface water within the allotment.

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Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals) ☐ Standard doesn't apply

Picabo milkvetch (*Astragalus oniciformis*) has the potential to occur in the Burmah Allotment. Picabo milkvetch is a wiry, diffuse, perennial milkvetch that occurs on deep, stable sandy soils overlying basalt, with flat to rolling topography, at approximately 3500 to 5000 ft elevation. This species tends to occur in areas where competing vegetation is sparse. It flowers May to July. Associated species include Wyoming big sagebrush, Basin big sagebrush, threetip sagebrush, thickspike wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, and needle-and-thread grass.

Picabo milkvetch is endemic to the northern edge of the Snake River Plain, from Gooding east to the eastern boundary of Craters of the Moon National Monument, and the lower foothills of the Pioneer Mountains near Picabo.

Threats include soil-disturbing activities including road/trail construction, pipeline construction, and high-intensity livestock use (such as around trough sites) and competition with weedy species.

The allotment is within designated Key sage grouse winter habitat. Breeding habitat was considered marginal due to low herbaceous vegetation height. The low height could be a result of fewer of the mid-sized bunchgrasses than expected. Brood rearing habitat was considered marginal because of the lack of reliable water sources. Winter habitat was considered suitable.

Sage grouse late brood rearing habitat would be a product of the artificial wetland adjacent to the canal. This wetland area is of marginal quality. None-the-less, the BLM has no direct control over the availability of water nor is there any water right on public land.

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Field Manager's Determination Rationale:

I have determined that Standard 1-Watersheds and Standard 8-Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals are being met and conform to all applicable Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in the Burmah Allotment #80608. I have also determined that Standard 4-Native Plant Communities is not being met, but livestock grazing is not a significant factor and conforms to all applicable Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. Standard 2-Riparian Areas and Wetlands, Standard 3-Stream Channel and Floodplains, Standard 5-Seedings, Standard 6-Exotic Plant Communities, and Standard 7-Water Quality do not apply to the Burmah Allotment.

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Field Manager Date